Congress of the United States Washington, DC 20515

June 1, 2021

The Honorable Lloyd Austin Secretary of Defense 1000 Defense Pentagon Washington DC 20301-1000

Dear Mr. Secretary,

We appreciate the hard work of the brave volunteers that make up the National Guard. They have served our nation honorably, both at home and abroad. After the unprecedented events of the past year that included COVID-19 response and civil unrest in addition to natural disasters and overseas deployments, we owe the National Guard a debt of gratitude. However, strain on the National Guard has been building for years as hurricane response in Florida, winter storm and flood rescue in Texas, and combatting wildfires in California has been persistent.

As you may know, 15 of the nation's top 25 most populous counties are located within California, Florida, and Texas. As elected representatives from the nation's three most populous states, we have an obligation to ensure that these civilian warriors, and our state bureaus, have the resources they need to fulfill the full range of missions we task them with, including defense support for civil authorities and domestic missions in support of Governors.

However, with our current and growing population levels, our states have the lowest Guardsmento-civilian ratios in the country, with California at 54th, Florida at 53rd, and Texas at 52nd. The extraordinary circumstances of the past year have highlighted the strain on our Guard units have been under for too long, potentially hurting recruitment, retention, and readiness. The limited resources allocated to our states has affected our Guard bureaus' ability to rotate personnel, putting greater demands on Guard families.

We appreciate that the Department has recognized this concern. In its implementation guidance for the National Defense Strategy, the Department said: "Demographic and economic trends within the U.S. will challenge our ability to recruit and retain quality Guardsmen over the next several years. Meeting this challenge is fundamental to our long-term success."

Furthermore, among the recommendations in the National Guard Bureau's "Impact of U.S. Population Trends on National Guard Force Structure" Report to Congress released in April 2021, the Bureau says: "as the U.S. population continues to shift from North and North Central regions of the country to the South and West, the National Guard may need to evaluate reallocating mission sets to other geographic areas to keep pace with changing demographics across the country."

Therefore, we respectfully ask that you carefully review the report, examine the current resource allocations, and work with us to grow the size of Guard bureaus in our states. As we consider National Guard force structure policy in the National Defense Authorization Act, please let us know what resources or authorities you need to ensure they have an appropriate and sustainable force structure allocation to meet their mission requirements, without impacting missions in other states.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Cordially,

Michael Waltz Florida's 6th District

Ken Calvert

California's 42nd District

Ronny Jacke n Texas's 13th District

Brian Mast

Florida's 18th District

Kay Granger

Texas's 12th District

Neal Dunn

Florida's 2nd District

John H. Rutherford

Florida's 4th District

Stephan e Murphy Florida's 7th District

Jimmy Panetta

California's 20th District

Marc A. Veasey

Texas's 33rd District

Salud Carbajal

California's 24th District

Scott Peters

California's 52nd District

Eric Swalwell

California's 15th District

Henry Cyellar

Texas's 28th District

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Carlos Gimenez
Florida's 26 th District
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Louie Gohmert Texas's 1st District
Pat Fallon
Texas's 4th District
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Matt Gaetz
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Scott Franklin
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Kevin Brady
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Jodey Arrington

Texas's 19th District

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Tony Gonzales Texas's 23rd District oung Kim California's 39th District

alunto Jay Obernolte California's 8th District

David G. Valadao California's 21st District

Darrell Issa California's 50th District

Lance Gooden Texas's 5th District

Van Taylor Texas's 3rd Distric

Bill Posey Florida's 8th District

Kat Cammack Florida's 3rd District uen Aot

Florida's 9th District

California's 16th District

Filemon Vela Texas's 34th District

Jerry McNerney California's 9th District

Lois Frankel Florida's 21st District

Charlie Crist Florida's 13th District

Kathy Castor
Kathy Castor

Florida's 14th District

Texas's 36th District

Troy Nehls Texas's 22nd District Mario Díaz-Balart
Florida's 25th District

W Gregory Steube
Florida's 17th District

Roger Williams
Texas's 25th District

Doug LaMalfa
California's 1st District

Randy Weber

Texas's 14th District

Beth Van Duyne
Texas's 24th District

Pete Session
Texas's 17th District

Will I. W. Land

Michael T. McCaul Texas's 10th District

Gus Bilirakis Florida's 12th District